

TASK FORCE REPORT- SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

In order for the state and municipalities to work together more effectively to promote proactive water resource management and sustainable development and water resource protection practices, the Water Policy Task Force recommends appropriate planning, additional tools, technical assistance on how to use the tools, incentives to use the tools, and a toolbox to keep us organized. In addition, better coordination and setting clear priorities for new data, assessment and monitoring to support the Water Policy will be required.

I. THE TOOLBOX

- **RECOMMENDATION 1:** Create a toolbox based on the Stress Framework and water offsets, with increasingly stringent recommendations and requirements as a community approaches “stressed” conditions. This will move local and regional water entities to a more proactive posture and also provide guidance as to when certain tools should be used.

II. PROMOTE PROACTIVE WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- **RECOMMENDATION 2:** Develop clear guidance and planning materials to help communities on how to meet existing and future water uses by developing watershed solutions based on water budgets.
- **RECOMMENDATION 3:** Advance the efficient use of water by: (a) revising the Water Conservation Standards to include measurable criteria; (b) developing a seasonal peak pricing strategy; (c) pursuing legislation that requires local enterprise accounts to fund operation and maintenance of infrastructure; and (d) crafting a policy on maintenance and repair of leaking water supply and sewer system infrastructure.
- **RECOMMENDATION 4:** Increase treated wastewater recharge and reuse.
- **RECOMMENDATION 5:** Promote stormwater recharge close to its site of origin.
- **RECOMMENDATION 6:** Advance effective water supply management by: (a) crafting a state policy on water supply development; and (b) actively promoting the optimization of water withdrawals.

III. PROMOTE A PARTNERSHIP WITH MUNICIPALITIES TO GROW SMARTER, and PROTECT AND RESTORE THE ECOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

- **RECOMMENDATION 7:** Develop clear guidance and planning materials (including the “Growing Smarter Toolkit”) to help municipalities, developers and consultants advance development that reduces negative impacts on the environment.
- **RECOMMENDATION 8:** To protect aquatic habitats, including lakes and ponds, implement and integrate Living Waters and BioMap into planning, education, and outreach efforts to landowners and local decision-makers, and a mix of protection, smart growth, and restoration projects.
- **RECOMMENDATION 9:** Develop a methodology for prioritizing restoration projects and measuring success based on the approach of using Target Fish and Fish Communities as an indicator of environmental conditions.
- **RECOMMENDATION 10:** Establish a grant program that works with communities to protect land critical to water resource priorities and seeks opportunities to thereby enhance natural treatment capacities and reduce costs.

IV. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND COORDINATION

- **RECOMMENDATION 11:** Provide communities, developers and consultants with a single point of contact for technical assistance on interagency permitting issues, environmentally-friendly development strategies (including the “Growing Smart Toolkit”), fast-tracking, and resource protection strategies within EOE’s Office of Technical Assistance.
- **RECOMMENDATION 12:** Create a working group to define pre-application processes, coordinated public comment periods and other coordinating strategies so as to arrive at holistic timelines for permits that involve various agencies.
- **RECOMMENDATION 13:** Take advantage of the new OCD structure to advance more effective planning with Mass Highways and other development agencies. As a first step, work to improve culvert, bridge, road and roadbed design in order to address impacts to: (a) fish and wildlife passage at road/water crossings; and (b) habitat along highways.

V. INCENTIVES TO USE THE TOOLS

- **RECOMMENDATION 14:** Promote sustainable development, timely maintenance of old infrastructure (Fix-It-Early), and the protection of priority water resources through refinements to the Clean and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund loan programs.
- **RECOMMENDATION 15:** Actively promote greywater (reclaimed water) reuse at specific recreational and institutional venues and new large development sites.